

# **Exhibit 15**

Declaration of Eric Rassbach



## Precursory Statement from UCLA Palestine Solidarity Encampment

Today is day 207 of Israel's genocidal campaign against Gaza, and 76 years into the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

**Talk to us about safety.** Last night, law enforcement assaulted the UCLA Palestine Solidarity Encampment. Over the span of 12 hours, police brutalized students and community allies, broke down the encampment barricades, and targeted the most vulnerable inside, resulting in over 200 arrests. **Safety.**

In an orchestrated effort, CHP and LAPD shot students with rubber bullets and threw flashbang grenades to disarm and paralyze them, while zionists attacked students with pepper spray and bear mace outside and within the encampment. Police arrested hundreds, beating them back with batons before dragging them to the ground for detainment. Officers were fully equipped with riot gear against weaponless students who created a human chain to defend our encampment from sanctioned abuse by the university. **And yet, they dare speak to us on safety.**

Police specifically targeted students wearing keffiyehs, who often wore them as masks when we could not find the proper protective equipment. While they performed in full composure under clear media surveillance, the police committed the brunt of their brutalities where press was not present. They tore students from our human chain and shot rubber bullets at close range, doing this in the corners of the Royce and Haines Hall barricade away from media coverage. Many were rushed to the ER after the bullets connected with heads and hands. **Tell us: is this safety?**

Time and time again this university has emphasized that all its actions were guided by one ideal— **safety**. Who was unsafe last night? Who was unsafe the night before? We, the students, have been the targets of despicable attacks employed by an uncaring tyrannical extension of the zionist project. Gene Block mentions that the encampment had become a “focal point for serious violence”. Violence from who? **Perhaps the zionist aggressors whom the school allowed to remain directly across from our encampment for days?**

By refusing to protect its students against chemical weapons and fireworks— literal acts of terrorism— and by deploying the LAPD to brutally tear down the student encampment, UCLA is deliberately crushing a nonviolent movement calling for divestment from genocide. Safety seems to have a new meaning to the oppressive and repressive administration. To the UCLA administration, 'safety' has nothing to do with its students or with the 38,000+ Palestinian lives lost in Gaza over the last 200 days. The only 'safety' our university cares about is that of its investments in a system that profits from genocide. **Our administration dares to speak to this community about safety and yet the only thing keeping us safe is each other.**

*Sumud*, or صمود, is the Palestinian concept of collective resilience and steadfastness. The Palestinian Solidarity Encampment remains strong in their *sumud*. To students, faculty, and community members: reflect on these days in the community of the encampment. Structures of violence should not be utilized by UCLA— a supposed free speech advocate— to suppress our demands. We would relive this week again and again if it means the liberation of Palestine and we remain committed to our just cause- as should you all. **We will not stop, we will not rest.**

In solidarity,

The repressed, oppressed, and forever-resolved UCLA Palestine Solidarity Encampment.